



NOAA FY 2001 Budget Request Fact Sheet

LANDS LEGACY INITIATIVE

OUR SEAS AND OUR SKIES



Marine Sanctuaries: Our Special Ocean Places - \$10.0 Million Increase

NOAA is requesting \$35 million in FY 2001, an increase of \$10.0 million, to strengthen its protection of the nation's only system of marine protected areas: the twelve National Marine Sanctuaries. The "crown jewels of the marine environment", these nationally significant coastal and ocean ecosystems provide extraordinary economic, recreational, educational, scientific, and aesthetic value to local coastal communities and visitors from around the world. NOAA's National Marine Sanctuaries request is a key component of the Administration's FY 2001 Lands Legacy Initiative, and complements other Lands Legacy investments protecting and restoring our valuable ocean and coastal resources. The National Marine Sanctuaries exist in Federal and/or state waters near: California, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Massachusetts, North Carolina, Texas, Washington, and American Samoa.

NOAA's National Marine Sanctuaries



NOAA Budget

	FY 2001 Change \$ millions
National Ocean Service	
Ocean Resource Conservation and Assessment (Coral Reef Conservation)	\$4.0
Ocean and Coastal Management (Coastal Zone Management Act Program)	\$94.8
(Coastal Nonpoint Pollution Control)	\$2.0
(National Estuarine Research Reserve System)	\$6.0
(National Marine Sanctuaries)	\$10.0
National Marine Fisheries Service	
Conservation and Management Operations (Coral Reef Protection)	\$5.0
Procurement, Acquisition, and Construction Account (National Estuarine Research Reserve System)	\$2.0
Other Accounts	
(Coastal Impact Assistance Fund)	\$100.0
(Pacific Salmon Fund)	\$42.0
Lands Legacy Total New Funding	\$265.8

The Challenge of Our Marine Sanctuaries

NOAA is the Nation's trustee for these invaluable natural and cultural resources called National Marine Sanctuaries. This is an increasingly challenging responsibility as coastal populations continue to increase and demand for use, enjoyment and protection of these marine areas grows. The challenge is to conserve for the use and enjoyment of future generations these complex marine ecosystems in the face of increasingly demands and severe environmental threats, such as: increased human activities, land-based pollution, habitat loss, and over-harvesting of marine resources.

Meeting the Challenge

Exploring, understanding, and cataloguing the diverse life within our Sanctuaries will better position us to make informed management decisions in the future and meet the Sanctuary management challenges of the new millennium. The proposed funding will enable the agency to effectively meet these conservation challenges, as well as position NOAA to protect our ocean's diverse natural and cultural treasures. To reach this goal, NOAA will embark on three related endeavors to ensure the viability of these special ocean places:

1. Developing a More Informed Citizenry. Marine Sanctuaries achieve conservation through many means, including educating the general public and investing in an enforcement program that emphasizes education about our valuable coastal resources and

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Big Sur at Monterey Bay NMS

impacts of human activities.

As NOAA continues to support the Sustainable Seas Expeditions and its education activities, many sectors of the public, including student groups, will become better informed about the importance and fragility of the marine environment. The National Marine Sanctuary program is currently investing in a comprehensive ocean resource education plan. These additional funds will enable initial implementation of that plan, including:

- Increased on-site interpretation at Olympic Coast (beach visitors), Flower Garden Banks (dive boats), Channel Islands (weather kiosks), and Florida Keys (on the water interpretation) and a new education coordinator at Fagatele Bay.
- Developing site-specific visitors center exhibits, including New England Aquarium (Stellwagen Bank), maritime heritage and cultural resources (Thunder Bay and Channel Islands) and Santa Cruz (Monterey Bay).

Education and enforcement will continue to be a program priority, new funding will provide special training and additional sanctuary-focused enforcement officials at the Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale, Olympic Coast, and Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuaries. Funding will help sanctuary staff work with the public using educational and interpretive tools to improve compliance with regulations, and respond to life and safety emergencies and threats and damages to sanctuary resources.

2. Better Science for Better Management. The funding will strengthen the operational capabilities at each Sanctuary to improve system-wide management and monitoring capabilities, and expand research at specific Sanctuaries to better address key management issues. The results will be critical in improving our understanding of important sanctuary resources including coral reefs, endangered marine mammals, sensitive habitats, and cultural resources. These management capabilities include:

- Updating management plans at existing Sanctuaries. These vital management plan revisions provide the blueprint for

base program operation (Monterey Bay, Gulf of the Farallones, Cordell Bank). The revisions will also examine the need for changes in site regulations, boundaries, and zoning.

- Improving science programs at each Sanctuary, including implementing baseline monitoring and characterizations of Sanctuary habitats. System-wide monitoring will allow sanctuaries to better understand changes in the health of sanctuary ecosystems.

- Investing in a better understanding of the contribution that ocean resources provide to the nation's economy and environment, which will result in improved ways to manage all ocean resources.

3. Accomplishing Our Mission. The twelve existing Sanctuaries represent a valuable commitment this country has made in conserving the nation's great coastal and ocean habitats. The growth of the program since the first site was dedicated 25 years ago, has resulted in major gaps in staffing, site infrastructure, and critical management, education and science programs.

Examples of gaps to be filled include:

- Improving the infrastructure of the Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale NMS to provide representation on all six major islands. This will include hiring needed staff for offices in Oahu, Kauai, and Kona; leasing vehicles for Kona, Maui, and Kauai; and increasing travel between islands for coordination.
- Improving the infrastructure at Flower Garden Banks NMS to better provide access to offshore resources. This includes moving the office to a waterfront facility; and purchasing, outfitting, and staffing a research vessel.

Together, these investments made possible by the Lands Legacy Initiative will result in major advances in the conservation and protection of the Nation's great ocean places.

Why NOAA?

NOAA is uniquely qualified to serve as the nation's trustee for these special ocean places. In addition to more than 25 years of experience managing these sites under the statutory mandate of the National Marine Sanctuaries Act, NOAA has the comprehensive scientific and management expertise needed to ensure that these complex environmental challenges are met, and that management of these sites is carried out effectively for their long-term protection.

NOAA has historically worked closely with other partners in Federal, state and local governments, academia, and the private sector to meet the complex challenges of conserving ocean ecosystems. The funds will strengthen those ties by building capacity both within NOAA and among its conservation partners.

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